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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SOME COUNTY AGENTS' COMMENTS ON FARM AND HOME
PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN NEW ENGLAND COUNTIES,
TAKEN FROM 1954 NARRATIVE REPORTS

The following series of comments from 35 county agricultural agents in New England represent considerable variation in approach, but a strong common thread of understanding and purpose. Each statement represents a county. In total they account for over half of the counties in New England.

Much of the work and the thinking is a result of activities under way prior to the availability of new funds in July 1954. Most of it has to do with farm planning, which is the place where these agents wanted to start. It is largely with individual families, which again expresses a desire by the agents to get some experiences in this way before meeting with several families in a group. From the comments made it is easy to see that before the end of another year they will have greatly expanded and broadened the work now under way.

"Under the supervision of the State extension economist, the special agent will carry out the intensified farm planning program by communities. At present the program is designated for the dairy farmer, due to the squeeze between falling milk prices and high production costs.

"A series of seven planning meetings will be held in a community with individual farm calls following each meeting. Upon completing of group meetings in an area, follow-up calls of at least once a month will be made to assist farmers in carrying out the proposed farm management practices.

"Due to the early stages of the program, the results cannot be analyzed. To date three planning meetings have been held with six co-operators showing a definite interest in the intensified planning work."

"In line with increased emphasis by the Extension Service in the field of Farm and Home Business Counseling, this agent wishes to present in a very general way activities which indicate a satisfactory commencement of this important work phase which has such wide application possibilities.

"While not labeled as such, the 'Farm Business Agreement' or 'Two-Generation Father and Son' countywide meeting sponsored by the Young Farmer Group, was indicative of Farm and Home Business Counseling

problems which exist throughout the county. It further typifies an important segment of this type of work.

"Partially as a result of the above meeting and publicity relating to it, and through other day to day contacts, this agent has counseled directly with 13 farmers on matters of concern to the family as a unit. Matters involving directly or indirectly family objectives and the physical property around them through which objectives must be reached. Several other families were worked with along these lines, but not to the same degree.

"This agent's work in various individual projects and enterprises is being gradually modified in such a manner that each will be in position to more definitely contribute to the farm and home business counseling concept."

"About 12 farm families were given individual assistance with detailed 'advance type' of economic and business counseling. The applicants for this type of help were in general young farm families seeking additional credit. In a few outstanding cases the need for financial guidance from the management standpoint appeared more imperative than the need for further extending of short term credit.

"Our real estate mortgages situation is quite generally heavy on all of the farms studied so that it would seem rather fruitless to try to convert short term credit into long term for repayment leniency. The number one handicap which is now confronting the family businesses being studied at this time indicates a 'too-easy' policy on short term credit in the past so as to put a heavy burden on the family in the cut-back years which we are in since 1953.

"Individual assistance rendered to one family required nearly 2 days of financial figuring. It included a year's planned financial budget month by month. The very confidential nature of the Farm and Home Counseling makes it imperative that we do considerable individual counseling. The one fly in the ointment seems to be time or manpower ample to accomplish results.

"In this county with one agricultural agent and separate dairy, poultry, and fruit and vegetable extension programs working independently of each other it could necessitate some drastic change in our methods and programs and personnel to enable us to render Farm and Home Counseling Service to all of our farmers. Some of our better farmers feel that they are entitled to it and need it as much as our younger, less experienced men."

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"Since considerable time had to be spent this year in getting the office reestablished, it was not possible to spend as much time as anticipated in doing farm planning or counseling. There appears to be plenty of opportunity to do this type of work if time can be made available for it. When considering the whole farming operation it takes considerable time to discuss the detailed program with the operator and his family, consequently only a small number of farmers have been worked with this past year. With an assistant agent being available for 1955 it is anticipated that more of this work can be done. Examples of the type of work needing attention and those that were worked with during 1954 are as follows:

"1. Farmer purchased an adjoining farm and wanted assistance in working out a program whereby he could make the best use of the additional cropland, as well as additional set of buildings. His home set-up did need additional cropland to make it an efficient dairy operation.

"2. Son just graduated from high school, wanted to go into partnership with his father. A father and son agreement was worked out with members of the family. This worked out reasonably satisfactorily and the most recent report was to ask for a review of the agreement before another year.

"3. Young man just returned from 2 years in the service and wanted to go into the poultry business on a larger scale than he was before entering the service 2 years previous. Helped him to work out a plan and set up a program whereby he should be able to finance and expand his enterprise.

"4. Man purchased a farm in the county and helped him work out a plan for remodeling barn to fit his needs as well as cropping program for the whole farm.

"These are only beginnings in the over-all farm planning job. To me this job cannot be accomplished in one or two visits. On some of these farms it may take considerable time to get detailed plans made. I have only listed four of the farms worked on this past year but numerous other examples could be cited."

"Early in 1954 two milk dealers announced that they would require their producers to install bulk milk tanks as a method of cooling milk. Needless to say, with milk prices falling and with the prospect of a heavy expenditure for buildings and equipment facing them, dairymen were seeking assistance with their problems.

"Two types of extension work were conducted by the agent in helping farmers seek solution to their problems. Here was an opportunity to sit down with the family, particularly with the farmer and his wife,

and do some farm and home counseling. Some budgeting was done in a few cases, in others it wasn't necessary; but in every case where expenditures of large sums of money was concerned, very careful studies were made. The other type of extension work with the farmers affected by the bulk cooling program was through meetings, radio talks, literature and farm visits.

"During 1954 there have been several requests for assistance in making out or deciding upon farm operating agreements. In some instances the problem involved father and son, in others partnerships or lease arrangements. Here again the farm and home counseling approach was made."

"Twelve individual farm management plans have been completed. These plans include careful inventories of available land, labor, capital, management, buildings, and equipment, as well as a thorough financial analysis. In each case, the farmer and county agent sit down together and work out a carefully thought out plan outlining the major goals for the next 5 to 10 years and the ways that they can be accomplished most economically. This work has been very well received, with requests coming in far faster than they can be taken care of.

"One farmer has reported voluntarily that his net earnings will be over \$1,000 greater than the previous year due to this type of work. He gives full credit to the Extension Service for help in analyzing his herd records, in developing his poultry enterprise, and in raising better roughage. And best of all in each case these families have started to learn to do the job themselves. Hence the job takes its rightful place as 'education' rather than 'service' that would have to be repeated."

"One fruit grower has been assisted in developing a farm management plan for his farm. Three years ago he purchased a relatively small fruit farm which he has been handling on a part-time basis. He wanted to find out how much of his income he could expect to earn from the farm. A tentative plan was worked out with him in cooperation with the county forester. Several of the recommended practices have already been carried out. As more experience is gained in this type of work with fruit growers this work can be expanded greatly."

"Individual farm planning, or Farm Family Counseling, as it has been designated, seemed to be one of the big topics of discussion at all conferences during the year.

"The agent, and the State extension economist, have worked with two different families on this type of project. On one farm we really

helped the family and felt rewarded for our time. However, on the other circumstances were very different and we found ourselves in a position of being used as a tool by the farmer in his dealing with a credit agency.

"In the first situation a young farmer had obtained credit from several different sources, much of it short term, and really needed some counseling in his attempt to get his finances whipped into shape and on longer terms so that he would be able to operate without such heavy short term payments. Many of our recommendations including a detailed farm fertilization plan were fully accepted by the loan agency with which the farmer did his refinancing.

"In the second case the farmer was already financed to the limit and his farm business well analyzed. We felt that in this case our only way of helping the farmer was to work with the farmer and the credit agency, both being willing, on recommendations for his next year's budget, fertilization program, and general farm management.

"Where a farm family is not tied up with credit agencies and requests counseling, we can work from the bottom up. However, the agent feels that where a family is deeply involved with a credit agency it must be a three-way, cooperative affair if much can be accomplished."

"To encourage farmers to look at their entire farm and home picture farm counseling was done so far as time permitted. This procedure requires a complete analysis of the entire farm business, establishment by the farm family of definite objectives and methods of attaining them.

"Five complete farm and home counseling projects were completed. These developed from individuals requesting help with a single project such as crops, dairy, etc. Through counseling they soon realized the close relationship of one project with another and so from this counseling a complete plan was developed."

"The new look in county agricultural agent work came in the form of Farm and Family Business Counseling, an individual family approach to over-all management of the family business. The new assistant agent, who heads up this work, felt that getting acquainted was an important first step. A knowledge of the general agricultural possibilities and problems would be necessary for counseling work. Since counseling requires discussion with farm families of all phases of the farm business, personal acquaintance with people would be important.

"Getting to know farm people of the county was done chiefly by farm visits. The new extension program of counseling was explained. Often these farmers had specific questions on some phase of farming such as dairy, crop production, etc. As much assistance as possible was given to them. Attendance at meetings for various farm organizations in the county has been helpful in introducing the agent. Brief talks at some of these meetings have helped in letting people know about the Extension Counseling Service now available to them.

"These farm visits and attendance at meetings have also been a source of information on the general situation and problems of the county. Other sources used in this connection were county census data, other agents' monthly reports, and previous planning work on file.

"Weekly news items in the county papers have been written, dealing with some phase of farm management and counseling. These items may be helpful in emphasizing the importance of management in a successful farm business.

"These activities together with contacts suggested by other agents in the office have resulted in eight requests for counseling service from farmers. Several others have asked for assistance on problems which may lead to counseling.

"Work on the actual counseling at the farms has been slow in getting under way. The harvest season has been very late in the county due to weather conditions. It was not until the latter part of October that people requesting counseling had time available for it. Information helpful in sizing up the present situation was obtained as opportunity offered.

"Counseling for one family is nearly complete except for a final report. Work is under way on two others. As the fall work on the farms slacks off, it is hoped that better progress can be made in Farm and Family Business Counseling.

"Cooperation with other county agencies in this new work has been sought. There appears to be a generally good relationship. A special meeting to discuss a letter of understanding with the Soil Conservation District was held. Besides district representatives there were SCS, Extension, and State Forestry personnel.

"The assistant agent helped one couple reorganize their farm business so as to become more efficient. These people are adhering very closely to a plan drawn up by them and the agent. They feel, even though they have been working on it only 8 months, that the plan has helped them considerably.

"The assistant agent spent some time talking over father and son agreements. Three of these will work out some type of agreement with the aid of the county extension business counselor.

"Many requests during the year were handled for information and help on farm transfers within the family, father and son partnerships, farm purchase, rentals, share operations, etc. With the counseling service,

many of these calls will now be handled by the counseling agent."

"Failure to carry out, and the lack of knowledge on how to carry out individual practices isn't by any means the only reason why many of our farmers aren't making out too well economically under today's conditions. Rather, it is the lack of ability to combine sound practices in their correct proportions within their own farm business that gets them into financial hot water. The farmer who lacks the ability to organize sound principles into a sound business usually has to work just as hard and has to tie up just as much capital as his neighbor who has the ability to bring sound practices into balance.

"Four farmers were helped this year in developing an over-all farm management plan on their farms. Two of these farmers are no longer in business. In both of these cases the farmers were in poor financial shape, and were getting in deeper all the time, because they simply didn't have land and couldn't get control of land to support their enlarged herds. They had made poor incomes, even when we had high milk prices, and in budgeting and planning, a future profit, which would give them even a small return, could not be expected. These farmers were not advised to get out of farming. The farmers and the agent, rather, came to the agreement that the farms were not, and could not be soundly made into economical production units under present conditions.

"The other two farms had different problems. One a problem of poor, extremely unproductive livestock, poor herdsmanship, and poor feed. Here there was lack of balance as well as lack of knowledge on how to perform individual practices on a sound basis. The agent has made several follow-up calls on this one and will make more if the management plan is to help. The other farm was owned by a retired city-worker who wanted simply to make a moderately good farm pay.

"There is already some indication that farmers who were worked with individually in past years have made attempts to put themselves on a sound management basis. It is quite apparent, however, that there is nothing final about a management plan and follow-up and constant changes in the original plans are always needed."

"This year the agent completed three farm counseling plans and two partial farm counseling projects were also completed. There is not much of a demand for this type of work because most farmers do not know about it yet. The State Extension farm management specialist has helped develop a better system of planning. However, each plan takes

about 10 to 12 hours to do so that time is the limiting factor on the number of completed plans that the agent can do."

"Nearly a dozen rental agreements or father and son partnerships were worked out during the past year. We had very good success with some of the agreements, while others did not last more than 6 months. The agent tried in each case to explain to both the owner and the renter that they must expect to do a good job of farm management, keep good records and to share the costs, according to the rental agreement given to them by the agent.

"In two or three cases the agent worked out a rather detailed plan with the assistance of the State extension economist, who did an excellent job in showing the whole picture to both the owner and the person who wanted to rent. In one case, we worked out a farm sale agreement, which later was carried out and both parties were very much satisfied."

"I spent some time working with two farm families on family counseling. This work seems quite interesting, but involves considerable time. The State farm management specialist assisted me in collecting the data on the first farm, but I was on my own on the other. It is hoped that I can do at least one a month during the coming year."

"Individual help in farm counseling or planning has been started. The name - 'Farm and Home Business Counseling' - has been given this phase of extension activity. Requests for complete counseling service have been numerous so that the addition of an assistant agent was necessary. Both agents are doing counseling work, however. Some 12 farm operations have been completely studied with farm families to date."

"Individual farm planning work was completed on two farms and several calls were made with the State extension economist to other farmers with problems of economic nature. There is a real need for farm planning service but it is hard to work it in with the other projects."

"The addition of an assistant county agent in this county will make it possible to do more individual Farm and Home Business Counseling work. Several conferences in preparation for Farm and Home Business Counseling have been attended, and up to date only one farm family has been worked with.

"During this past year the agent has been asked many more questions by farm families on general farm management problems than at any time in the past. Low milk prices and continuing high farm costs are responsible for this and the additional time made available through the assistant county agent will, I believe, be very profitably used."

"The major problem in the county seemed to be an over-all management problem and the necessity of emphasis on a complete plan rather than concentrating on separate parts of the farm business. More emphasis will be placed next year on how each project fits together to make a well-organized dairy business.

"The Green Pastures Program each year puts more and more emphasis on over-all management of the farm. A lot of the credit problems are caused by too much machinery on farms with few cows and low-producing cows. Our farmers in general are better cropmen than dairymen.

"Individual farm and home planning will help a great deal to bring out the weak points in the farmer's management program. Oftentimes it is difficult to make a direct approach to the problem through other extension methods."

"During the year a Farm and Home Business Counseling Service was developed. This was made possible by the addition of an assistant extension agent in August 1954. Farm and Home Business Counseling as the name indicates is a service that will provide farmers in the county with advice and counsel on farm management problems. During the 3 months the program has been in effect, most of the time has been spent explaining to various farmers the purpose of the program and type of service that can be expected. This slow start is worthwhile in order that the counseling service be given where most needed.

"During August two farmers were given counseling service. The State extension economist was present to assist with these farms. During the month of October two more farmers were assisted while requests were received from five more for the service. The method being used by the extension agents is to do the counseling service on an indi-

vidual farm in four or five stages. This gives the individual farmer a chance to think over each step before making any decisions. It is not possible, in the opinion of the county agent, to do a good farm home and counseling service in one or two days.

"The present method used is to first go over what the farmer would like to accomplish. Second, check on land, farm, buildings and live-stock thus securing data on what he now has. The farmer then is given about a week to think this over. A return visit is then made in which his whole financial structure is discussed and on a third farm visit, one or more methods he is now using is pointed out to be below average or new methods proposed. On a fourth visit, the agent then goes over the proposed course the farmer would like to take, assisting him in whatever manner he can, to point out any pitfalls.

"It is going to be difficult to indicate when an extension agent has completed his counseling service on any individual farm. At the present, all requests for service have been received from individuals whose financial situation is not too stable."

"Due to the fact that newspapers and magazines have given considerable publicity to the adding of assistant county agents in some counties, this agent has had eight requests for farm and home planning. Unfortunately this agent will be unable to fulfill these requests as they should be handled because with only one agent time will not permit. It does not seem justifiable to spend 2 or 3 days with one farm family while several other farmers wait for services from their county agent."

"The publicity arising from hiring five new assistant county agents has resulted in many requests for this planning activity in counties where there are no assistants. In this county the agent has had eight such requests. One complete plan has been prepared and written with the assistance of the State extension economist, and another has been started. The other six farmers were visited by the agent and the farm program analyzed. Advice and suggestions for improvements in the farm business was given. However, detailed written plans were not made for these farmers due to a lack of time on the agent's part."

"Early in January 1954 personal contacts were made with a small group of young farm couples in the county to see if they would be interested to participate in a series of meetings on farm and home development. Four evening work meetings of this group were held during January and February at which the farm and home management specialists from the university extension staff worked with the group in consideration of their farm and home situations and with some consideration of future farm and home plans. Following each workshop session there was an informal coffee hour get-together of the group which seemed to be very much appreciated and which undoubtedly had much value for the young couples concerned from the point of view of the informal discussions which took place as they became better acquainted. Some follow-up was done at the farms by the county home demonstration agent who had actively participated in these meetings, and the county agent, but it appears that more of this personal follow-up is needed if specific plans are to be developed and put into operation.

"During December 1953 a cooperative agreement was worked out which involved the participation of the county, the University of Massachusetts and Harvard University through H. P. Hood Foundation funds which would permit the hiring of a special worker for half-time work in each county. This plan was discussed with the extension service trustees and county commissioners and approved by both groups.

"The agent feels that the farm unit approach offers a splendid opportunity for the county agent to be of greater service and plans to work into it as rapidly as possible. The chief road-block at the present is lack of input-output data for valley crop farms."

"New emphasis has been placed upon this subject during 1954 in the following ways. A new county agent was employed on a part-time arrangement with the adjoining county, as a pilot project sponsored cooperatively by the Charles H. Hood Foundation, Harvard University, the State Extension Service, and the county.

"At the time when the new part-time agent became available to the county, both county agents sent a letter to the commodity groups indicating that his services would be available, and released suitable publicity to the press.

"Previous to a meeting scheduled to inform interested farmers about the farm planning opportunities available, one agent visited 10 farms with the new agent to encourage interest in this new program. At the meeting on July 14 both agents participated, together with the county agent manager and Mr. Bieber, explaining the program for this county.

"It is expected that increased activity will be forthcoming in this field, combining the efforts of the agricultural department and the home demonstration department in farm planning for older farm families.

Under the direction of Bob Marsh, 4-H Club Agent, the designated director of the YMW program for next year, increased emphasis with young farm families in farm and home planning by all three departments is anticipated."

"This is a new project conducted on a trial basis and because of the nature of the project only a limited number of farms can be handled. It is designed to give the farmer and his wife considerable detailed assistance in studying the farm potentials so that the farmer may re-organize and operate the farm with a high degree of efficiency, which would result in an increased net farm income.

"During the past year six farmers were contacted on the basis of information received by the county agent that they would be interested in such help and out of these six three were given assistance with the help of the farm management specialist and the county agent.

"The purpose of this work is to assist farmers in studying all the complex problems involved in the successful development of the farm and the home so they can shape a definite program to reach their objectives over a period of years.

"This planning work requires three, six, or more hours of study depending on individual situations. It means that the farmer and his wife and perhaps older children will sit down with a county extension staff member and specialists from the university and go through a stock-taking process to review such resources as are available, including finances, soils, and their adaption to farm use, production methods, marketing information, etc.

"In this study it is not intended that decisions will be made for the farmer. These must always be his (the farmer's) responsibility. We simply help him organize the basic information and help him see the entire farm and home planning problem.

"Because of the time involved in this type of personal service, the work must be done at a time when it is mutually agreeable. A list of those interested in this serious attempt to work out a sound farm planning program will be kept, and those interested will be contacted personally as to when it can be started."

"Early in the year a group of young farmers was invited to a series of meetings. Assisted by the agents and the extension farm management specialist these men prepared farm plans dealing with the financial development of their own comparatively new farm enterprises. The actual

planning was done by the farmers themselves with technical assistance being offered by Extension Service personnel. This plan seemingly worked out well for all concerned. Since the long-time aims of the Extension Service now lean heavily toward work of this type, both agents participated in the program in order to get a better understanding and a wider experience in the field."

"After the 1953 regional conference at Amherst regarding farm and home planning, work began in the county on a small scale, working primarily with young farmers. Interest was not high enough for an over-all dairy farm and home program and these groups were selected by the agent. A total of six families attended the initial work meeting and a total of four visits per family was made to give individual assistance.

"The agent feels that such a program requires an increasing number of farm visits if the work is to be accomplished. This seems to differ from the opinion of most of the agents in the State - their programs are aimed at the mass media approach.

"Approximately 50 families were assisted with definite farm and home planning problems; however, these were not recorded under the heading of organized farm and home planning. The problems were not of an over-all farm plan but more of the individual farm management nature."

"A group of nine young farmers all under 35 years of age were invited to a series of three afternoon planning meetings to discuss the operation of their dairy farms and to discuss with them also some of the requirements of accomplishments necessary to have successful family living. The meetings were arranged for three consecutive afternoons of 2-hour duration and on the appointed day six appeared for the meeting.

"While the general heading might be called Farm Planning, I rather like the term Aiding Farmers to Make Decisions.

"The first afternoon's discussion, entirely from the blackboard, using the Balanced Farming Book (the original rather than the current one) included the money necessary in a farm family home for its operation on the basis of number of children and a good family living which should be comparable to that received by any other skilled man working in industry and having continuous employment.

"The agent personally feels that one of our weaknesses in farm planning work has been not recognizing early in farm planning the goal of the farm family and discussing frankly the cash needs to obtain that goal.

After a discussion of the family side we switched over to an analysis of what the farm had on it in the form of livestock, cropland, buildings, potential of expansion and limitations of expansion. At this point we worked into the use of man work units, measurements of accomplishments, productivity and comparisons to average and better than average accomplishments. That concluded the first day's session.

"The second day's session was based almost entirely on agronomy and getting the maximum productivity in the form of pasturage and roughage from the farm; how it could be used and what livestock potential was possible on the farm using the land to its full capability. This ended in a considerable ramification and discussion of crops, fertilizing rates, breeding programs, raising replacements and finally the question of cost of carrying out these possibilities and what the return might be in dollars for use by the farm family.

"The third afternoon was devoted to the decision-making part of the series in which actual examples were proposed and then solved; such as the purchase of a hay baler or installation of barn cleaners, additions to the barn, the purchase of foundation cows for breeding purposes. These problems were worked out and methods shown how to make the decision and what to follow out. Also, while we were discussing this we brought into the picture decisions of improving family living such as more space in the home, better kitchen equipment, better equipment within the home, things for bringing the home up to a par with other families of comparable income.

"The amount of record keeping in this group was very little, mostly on a basis of setting down an inventory of what their farm was, amount of milk sold, how to project and budget their income in the operation of the farm. About a month after the meetings, the father of one of the boys came in and asked if I would visit their farm to sit down with them and work out a cropping program to take care of the increased herd they now had and needed to give a good living to two families. This was done. We visited two of the other farms and talked cropping plans with them. In one case the father is unable because of health to even talk about his farm and we went through considerable detail on major improvements on the farm that would reduce the labor demand, this being an 80-cow farm.

"These boys were chosen for this group because they were all on dairy farms; four of them had recently married and the wife of each was still working and the size of the farm business was not enough to justify a good living for two families on each farm. I think that eventually there will be further readjustments out of this group as a result of our three afternoon meetings.

"I have found out also that three afternoon meetings in succession cannot be run with full attendance. However, that is what the group wanted. Probably two afternoons in succession and then skip a week and have the third meeting would be a better plan. The reason being that the boys cannot get away from the farm for three consecutive afternoons without having to let something go on the farm.

"The next group to be worked with will be a group of young farmers who have purchased their farms and are carrying them on without any addi-

tional advice or help from their parents. This will be a group of about nine from the north side of the county and will be called together in some central location.

"There has been some other farm management work on the planning basis carried out this year on individual requests. Observations made and work done at the workshop have speeded up our ability to analyze the farm situation and help get other farmers on a long range and more encouraging farm program."

"Farm and home planning work was begun in February 1954 with a pilot project of six younger farm couples. In three all-day meetings with the assistance of the State extension economist and the agent, four of these six couples arrived at completed farm plans and have through the remainder of the report year kept these plans up to date.

"In view of the success of the first balanced farming group, 30 farm couples met in October of 1954 and have been assigned to groups of 10 each for three similar balanced farming series. One of these groups of 10 couples will undertake a complete home plan in addition to the usual farm plan. These three series will be conducted in 1955 and will be described in the 1955 balanced farming plan of work."

"This year no meetings were held with groups on farm and home planning. The program was handled through individual farm visits and a review of the program on 10 of the farms that were in the old program. On these visits the home agent and the agricultural agent sat down with the farmer and his wife, carefully went through the livestock and cropping system on the farm, made an estimate of potential expenses and receipts, and then balanced that with the home program and the estimated costs of regular operations and improvements.

"This re-analysis of the program on these farms, coming from one to three years after the original plan was made, gave us an excellent opportunity to study the ability of the people on the individual farms.

"Four of the eight farms in the first group were analyzed. These showed a very marked improvement in cropping system, livestock production, general income, and home improvements.

"The other six farms analyzed constituted what might be classified as a very interesting study, not only of farm conditions but of human nature. Two of these, both young farmers, are coming ahead rapidly, making and carrying out extensive adjustments for enlarging their farm operation. These two are certainly doing an excellent job, starting with a very small operation and building up a good economic unit.

"The owners of one of the other farms are well along in years and are getting along very well with a small operation plus a supplementary income through the boarding of children. The farm itself is too small and there is no opportunity to add more land at the present time. This condition, along with age, fairly indicates they are much better off to remain with the small operation and obtain supplementary income.

"The other three are entirely different. One - a man who has just purchased the farm and is planning to leave the shop and make agriculture his livelihood. He has had no farm experience and is requiring a lot of assistance in planning and supervision in carrying out details.

"The last two, both in the northern part of the county, can better be classified as pitiful cases. We doubt if either one will ever become a successful farm operator. Both of these men are a little beyond middle age in life. As a result, individual help and planning probably will not get us very far with either one.

"Visits were made to the other farms in the old farm and home planning group to check work being done, but the detailed plans were not completely reviewed in any case.

"Detailed farm plans were worked out on seven other places. These plans included livestock and cropping systems along with estimates of receipts and expenses. All but one of these studies or analyses were made on dairy farms. The other is a poultry farm. In this particular case a great deal more work must be done as the operator is attempting to readjust his whole farm program to allow one of his sons to come back with him on a full-time basis. This adjustment, along with the present economic situation in the poultry business, is a hard one and is going to require a considerable amount of careful analysis."

"On January 1 a new agent was employed to undertake the farm and home planning work of the enlarged program of the Extension Service. Prior to 1954 some preliminary work had been done with groups in farm business management, so that it was not a completely new venture. Almost immediately the project was undertaken on the basis of two groups; one dairy, and one poultry, concentrating on the younger men and women who were asked to enroll. In a series of four meetings for each, we undertook farm business management planning, with each of the enrollees participating at the meeting and having supporting work at home. These two groups represented 25 farms, and proved a practical and efficient way of getting the farm unit planning under way. Follow-up work at the farms was done for part of this number, but not yet completed.

"Another group of turkey growers had a similar school at a later date. In addition to this group method, other farmers were enrolled in the project with individual help being given. In all, 60 farm operators are participating in the project, a few of which have completed the

initial planning work, but many of the others have yet to make the changes necessary to carry out the plan."

"Assistance in connection with farm business planning and management is an every-day procedure over the telephone and also on answering letters and even on the radio. The county agent oftentimes knows the individual very well, the particular farm, the farmer's inclinations, the amount of his working capital and his weak and strong points on his own farm. Therefore, any advice given in situations where they are known so well and from such a complete background can be very helpful to the average farmer and what is said have a bearing on the particular individual farm. A conservative estimate would be that 325 farmers in Norfolk County were helped during the past year in the management of their farm business. The advice given by the agent in many cases was all inclusive, not forgetting the marketing end of the business as well as the particular production item being discussed.

"The agents attended a training conference, in fact two, held at the university in connection with farm and home planning. The associate agent has worked with three poultrymen and the county agent with three dairymen. Another series of three meetings for farm and home planning were held for turkey growers. Help was given the farmers at meetings and again at home."

"Father and son agreements continued to be suggested for consideration where appropriate. This field may need further attention as social security becomes important as a factor in the farmer's planning in the future.

"Adjustments in the type of farm business have been suggested to the poultrymen in the light of current economic conditions. For some, it means diversification, for others specialization. Some are eliminating hired labor and adjusting their business to a one-man operation, while others have been advised to adjust replacement schedules to make fuller use of their buildings and equipment. Direct marketing has been recommended for some.

"Two farm adjustment study groups were formed during the year. Each group held a series of meetings rotating among members' homes. Various adjustments were considered as the groups chose them, including the use of high efficiency laying rations, hatching one's own chicks, etc. Some of these analyses were reported to the poultrymen of the county in circular letters. After these preliminary studies, the groups tackled the complex problem of replacement schedules. Within the limitations of strain and hatch differences in egg production patterns,

these studies were very fruitful. The greatest gain, however, lays in the fact that the poultrymen became familiar with the budget approach to adjustments so they'll be able to approach other problems in the same manner.

"Major attention was given during the late winter and spring to the advantages, disadvantages, and management involved in the three basic methods of raising chickens, particularly for laying flock replacements; range, confinement, and platform rearing. Media used included meetings, circular letters, news articles, radio broadcasts and farm visits. Comprehensive analysis helped many growers to make or plan adjustments in their rearing programs which will strengthen their farm operations."

"Farm management and planning has been one of the important phases of the dairy program on which the agent has spent considerable time. However, much of this work is in conjunction with our regular program. It is much easier to maintain the interest of the farmer tying it in with the over-all program than trying to make farm management a separate entity. For example, in planning a forage program it takes into consideration the needs of the livestock, what the family is able to handle, land available, etc. Expansion or changing of operations to best meet the needs of the farm family has been stressed in our work with such groups as the Extension-Vo-ag Dairy Club which has been discussed previously.

"In the field the agent has discussed many of these over-all problems such as father and son partnerships, wills, suggested changes and how they fit into the over-all picture. Perhaps one of the things in which we may be able to be of assistance is in helping our smaller farmers to evaluate their situation and perhaps decide whether they might be better off in agriculture or in some other line of work.

"Realizing the need for more careful planning and organizing of the farm business, especially with high costs and reduced farm income, the agent attended the 2 weeks' farm management courses at the university.

"There were a number of suggestions which will help him to do a better job in tying in over-all farm planning in the field. While the crop planning material was something the agent had worked on for some time, the methods of using budgets to estimate best use of resources was very helpful. Methods of figuring additional costs such as depreciation, interest, upkeep, taxes, etc., as capital investment were more clearly understood."

"The agent has completed one program of balanced farm operation which was done at the request of one of the operators in the county. Other less formal aid has been given to many farmers in pointing out suggestions that might be considered in solving farm management difficulties."

"The agent during the year has assisted four different farmers in a complete farm plan, however, no request was made as regards the home.

"One father and son proposition was outlined and several alternatives suggested. Two days were spent with the State planning specialists in the field on two different cases.

"One day was spent also with the State planning specialist in a half hour radio broadcast as to what the new farm and home planning program is and what benefits farmers could derive from this service."





